

COVID & TEXAS SEXUAL ASSAULT (SA) PROGRAMS

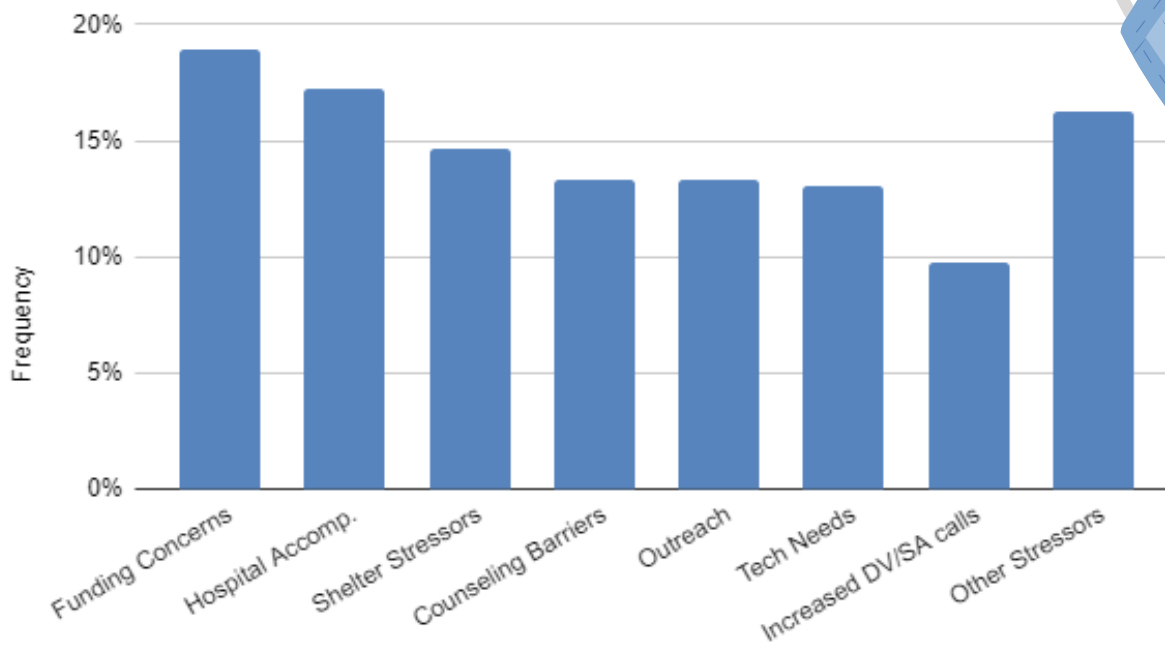
39% have seen SA numbers increase, especially for Domestic Violence (DV) related & child/minor SA calls

"We have [...] seen an increase in child physical and sexual assault. We have also seen an increase in child witness to violent crime." - Program Staff



46% report wait times for services, most notably for counseling & Spanish-language services

Challenges Reported by Program Staff



CHALLENGES REPORTED BY PROGRAM STAFF

Funding Concerns: Concerns with grant compliance, delayed funder payouts, loss of funding sources such as closing thrift stores & cancelled fundraisers, and funding COVID-related expenses.

Hospital Accompaniment (HA): Contract SANES not able to enter hospitals, not enough SANES in the area, & inability of staff to provide HA in person, and in some cases at all.

Shelter Stressors: Difficulty managing social distancing, increased shelter requests with shelters at capacity, stress of shelter in place (SIP) orders on shelter clients, increased expenses for staff overtime & hotel stays.

Counseling Barriers: Increased waitlists for counseling & Spanish language services, client cancellations, client discomfort with tele-services, & knowledge/infrastructure gaps to provide tele-counseling.

Outreach: Limited ability to provide community outreach & education and outreach to potential clients in crisis.

Increased DV/SA calls: Former clients returning for new support due to COVID triggers, higher DV/SA call volume with limited ability to safely follow-up as many are sheltering in place with abusers.

Tech Needs: Need funds for devices, wi-fi, & secure remote access/infrastructure to offer HIPPA compliant remote services; some staff using own resources.

Other Stressors: Concerns for personal safety, lack of PPE, work-home balance, and not doing "enough" in limited remote capacity.

*"Being a counselor working from home - **it feels like I'm on call 24/7** when clients need something. That's been an adjustment in setting boundaries and just **seeing the disparity** in the clients is stressful." - Program Staff*

INCREASED SURVIVOR NEEDS

Housing: Increased housing instability, higher demand for transitional housing & DV/SA shelter.

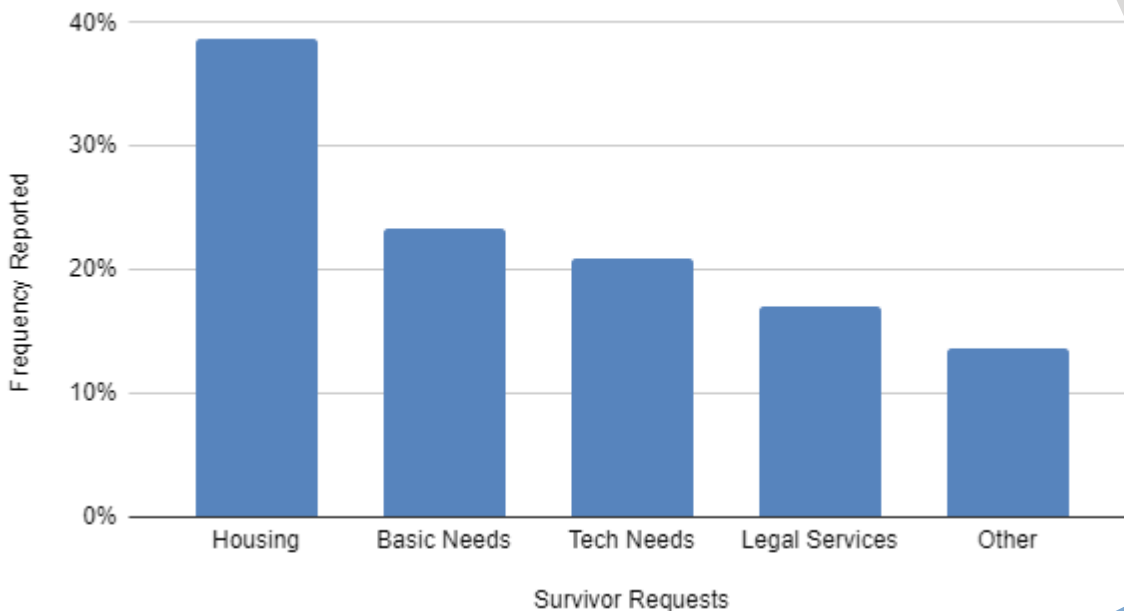
Basic Needs: Clients experiencing job loss and need basics such as utility & rent assistance, food, transportation, diapers, etc.

Legal Services: Uncertainty around protective orders. Increased requests for protective order accompaniment & immigration court support. Court dates being pushed back & causing additional stress for clients.

Technology Needs: Clients have variety of access issues including lack of internet, devices, and platforms/apps; some discomfort with using technology to receive services.

Other: COVID concerns around providing services, Asian communities being attacked/blamed for COVID, Spanish & Other language access needs, increased risk of isolation

Survivor Requests Reported by Staff



HELPFUL STRATEGIES

Establish Policies & Protocols: Programs established protocols for remote & limited in-person service provision including updated informed consent for services, & social distancing protocols.

Utilize Tech Resources: Programs quickly pivoted to remote services using platforms like doxy.me, RAINN helproom, zoom health, & invested in equipment for staff such as laptops, cell phones, and VPNs.

Client Emotional Support: Technology increased program capacity to provide emotional support to clients and is noted as one of the most successful services offered in these times.

SANE & Community Support: Strong relationships with SANES and community orgs help fill gaps in survivor basic needs and connecting them to services at centers.

Embrace Innovative Ideas: Innovative ideas help programs move forward while SIP orders are in place such as online thrift store sales, digital outreach & education, and developing activities for shelter clients.

Staff Wellness & TAASA Support: Program staff encouraged to prioritize wellness by taking wellness days, frequent check-ins, practicing flexibility, & receiving support from TAASA.

What has helped

